

Clean sweep

Police and K-9 search schools after shotgun shells discovered

By Susanna Sheehan
Clipper Editor

On Sunday, June 11, three live 12 gauge shotgun shells were found by a custodian in the Duxbury Middle School gym, prompting a police search with canines that day and another search at the beginning of school Monday.

The schools announced Tuesday that they had discovered the identity of the student who brought the shells into the building. He is a middle school student, said Duxbury Police Deputy Chief Stephen McDonald.

Both Duxbury Schools Superintendent Dr. Benedict Tantillo and Duxbury Police Chief Matthew Clancy issued statements about this incident at the beginning of the week.

According to Clancy, "an alert custodian...found three live 12 gauge shotgun shells while cleaning in the middle school gym" on Sunday. The shells were discovered under the bleachers.

Police and school officials then searched the schools with police dogs from the Norfolk County Sheriff's Department and the Quincy Police Department that were specially trained to locate firearms and ammunition. Every student locker was searched in both the middle and high schools.

On Monday, police were at the schools to facilitate a search of every classroom by teachers and school staff. During this search, middle school students were told to gather in the cafeteria and high school students were sent to the gym. As an additional precaution, police had students open their musical instrument cases as they left the holding areas.

"On Monday teachers and school staff were asked to report early for work to conduct a secondary visual inspection of their classrooms and work areas under the premise that they are the most familiar with those spaces and would be able to quickly note something out of the ordinary," said Clancy in a press release issued on June 12. "Ten minutes before the beginning of classes the all clear was given and students were allowed to proceed to their classrooms without further incident."

No other ammunition was found and police believe the shells may have been for skeet shooting. The words "gun club" were stamped on them.

McDonald said Tuesday that police learned that the boy had brought the shotgun shells to school a couple of weeks ago.

"He didn't do it for nefarious reasons," said the deputy chief. "It was just to show friends. He got nervous and dumped them under the bleachers."

The police investigation is ongoing, but no charges have been filed against the student yet, said McDonald. When asked if they would be, he answered: "That's part of the pending investigation."

Tantillo issued an email notifying parents that the student had been identified on Tuesday. In it, he said the student faces "school consequences as well as legal ones."

The discovery of the three shotgun shells is another in a string of recent incidents at Duxbury school that have had the police responding and news crews buzzing about town. Last week, a third swastika was found drawn on sink in a boys' bathroom in the middle school and during the last week in May, two other swastikas were discovered, one in a middle school bathroom and one in the high school gym. These events follow the discovery of a rifle shell

casing in a boys' bathroom at the middle school in April. In all but one case, the students who committed the acts were identified by both the schools and police.

Tantillo said these recent events are bad for Duxbury and said they are not representative of its school system and its students.

"I am very disappointed that someone has once again put our schools and town in a poor light," stated Tantillo. "The incidents of the past two weeks and this morning are disheartening and not what our schools and this town represent."

On a brighter note, Tantillo praised his school staff and Duxbury police for a job well done to ensure the safety of all the students.

"The response to this incident was a total team effort," said Tantillo. He also thanked the students who were in the holding areas Monday for acting in "a mature and orderly manner."